Report for Appropriate Assessment Screening

as required under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive

(Council Directive 92/43/EEC)

Development at the Existing Oxigen Waste Recycling Facility

Coes Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth

Prepared by: Moore Group – Environmental Services

14th April 2016

On behalf of Oxigen Environmental

& Louth County Council

Client	Oxigen Environmental
Project	Oxigen Coes Road AAS1
Title	Report for Appropriate Assessment Screening Development at the Existing Oxigen Waste Recycling Facility Coes Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth

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Moore Archaeological and Environmental Services Limited				

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1. Introduction

1.1. General Introduction

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) requires that certain plans and projects requiring planning permission must be screened for potential impact on Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs). This process aims to establish whether a full Appropriate Assessment as required by Article 6 of the Directive is required in any particular case.

This report contains information required for the competent authority, in this case Louth County Council, to undertake an Appropriate Assessment (AA) process on the proposed development of (a) a lean-to extension of 95 m² to the front of the existing Waste Recycling Building, (b) installation of Odour Abatement Plant to the existing Waste Recycling Building to include a 20m high Stack, (c) associated site services at the existing Oxigen Waste Recycling Facility, Coes Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth.

The project site is located approximately 600 m from and in the catchment of Dundalk Bay which is designated as the Dundalk Bay SAC (Site code: 000455) and Dundalk Bay SPA (Site code: 004026).

It has been prepared by Moore Group – Environmental Services on behalf of Oxigen Environmental and Louth County Council and assesses the potential for the proposed development to impact on sites of European-scale ecological importance in accordance with Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive. The report was compiled by Ger O'Donohoe (B.Sc. Applied Aquatic Sciences (GMIT, 1993) & M.Sc. Environmental Sciences (TCD, 1999)) who has over 20 years' experience in environmental impact assessment and has completed numerous Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports and Natura Impact Statements in terrestrial and aquatic habitats.

The report assesses the potential for the proposed development to impact on sites of European-scale ecological importance. It is necessary that the Project has regard to Article 6 of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (as amended) (referred to as the Habitats Directive). This is transposed into Irish Law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (S.I. 477) (referred to as the Habitats Regulations).

1.2. Legislative Background - The Habitats and Birds Directives

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) is the main legislative instrument for the protection and conservation of biodiversity in the EU. Under the Directive Member States are obliged to designate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) which contain habitats or species considered important for protection and conservation in a European Union context.

The Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC as codified by Directive 2009/147/EC), is concerned with the long-term protection and management of all wild bird species and their habitats in the EU. Among other things, the Directive requires that Special Protection Areas (SPAs) be established to protect migratory species and species which are rare, vulnerable, in danger of extinction, or otherwise require special attention.

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas, designated under the Birds Directive, form a pan-European network of protected sites known as Natura 2000. The Habitats Directive sets out a unified system for the protection and management of SACs and SPAs.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the requirement for an assessment of proposed plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites.

Article 6(3) establishes the requirement to screen all plans and projects and to carry out a further assessment if required (Appropriate Assessment (AA)):

Article 6(3): “Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.”

Article 6(4): “If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, Member States shall take all compensatory

measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to the beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest."

This Screening Report is a documentary record of the Appropriate Assessment process on the effects of the effects of the proposed development of (a) a lean-to extension of 95 m² to the front of the existing Waste Recycling Building, (b) installation of Odour Abatement Plant to the existing Waste Recycling Building to include a 20m high Stack, (c) associated site services at the existing Oxigen Waste Recycling Facility, Coes Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth, referred to in this case as the Project.

2. Methodology

The Commission's methodological guidance (EC, 2002) promotes a four-stage process to complete the AA, and outlines the issues and tests at each stage. An important aspect of the process is that the outcome at each successive stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required.

Stages 1-2 deal with the main requirements for assessment under Article 6(3). Stage 3 may be part of Article 6(3) or may be a necessary precursor to Stage 4. Stage 4 is the main derogation step of Article 6(4).

Stage 1 Screening: This stage examines the likely effects of a project either alone or in-combination with other projects upon a Natura 2000 site and considers whether it can be objectively concluded that these effects will not be significant.

Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment: In this stage, the impact of the project is considered on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site with respect to the conservation objectives of the site and to its structure and function.

Stage 3 Assessment of Alternative Solutions: This stage examines alternative ways of implementing the project that, where possible, avoid any adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.

Stage 4 Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain: Where imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) exist, an assessment to consider whether compensatory measures will or will not effectively offset the damage to the sites will be necessary.

In order to ensure that the Project complies fully with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and all relevant Irish transposing legislation, Moore Group compiled this screening report on the Project on behalf of Louth County Council to determine if Stage 2 AA is required.

2.1. Guidance

The AA has been compiled in accordance with guidance contained in the following documents:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities. (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 rev.).
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10.
- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, 2001); hereafter referred to as the EC Article Guidance Document.
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC (EC Environment Directorate-General, 2000); hereafter referred to as MN2000.

2.2. Data Sources

Sources of information that were used to collect data on the Natura 2000 network of sites are listed below:

- Ordnance Survey of Ireland mapping and aerial photography available from www.osi.ie and Google Earth and Bing aerial photography.
- Online data available on Natura 2000 sites as held by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) from www.npws.ie including; the Natura 2000 network Data Form; Site Synopsis; Generic Conservation Objective data
    - Online database of rare, threatened and protected species
    - Publicly accessible biodiversity datasets.
- Status of EU Protected Habitats in Ireland. (National Parks & Wildlife Service, 2013)
- Relevant Development Plans and Local Area Plans in neighbouring areas.

3. Description of the Project

This report presents a screening assessment on the effects of the proposed development of (a) a lean-to extension of 95 m² to the front of the existing Waste Recycling Building, (b) installation of Odour Abatement Plant to the existing Waste Recycling Building to include a 20m high Stack, (c) associated site services at the existing Oxigen Waste Recycling Facility, Coes Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth. The site location is presented in Figure 1 with a site layout in Figure 2.

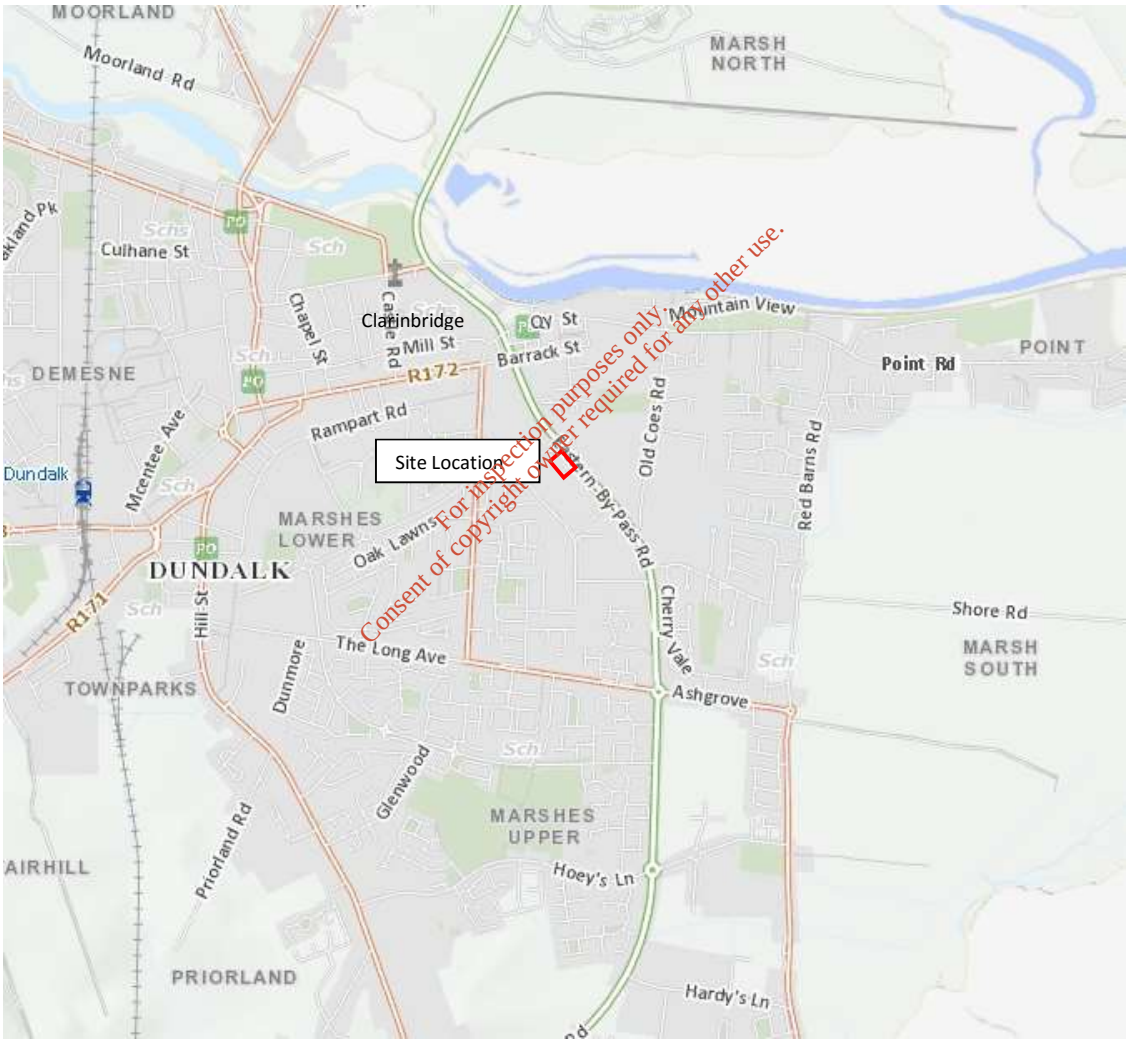

Figure 1. Site Location at Coes Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth.

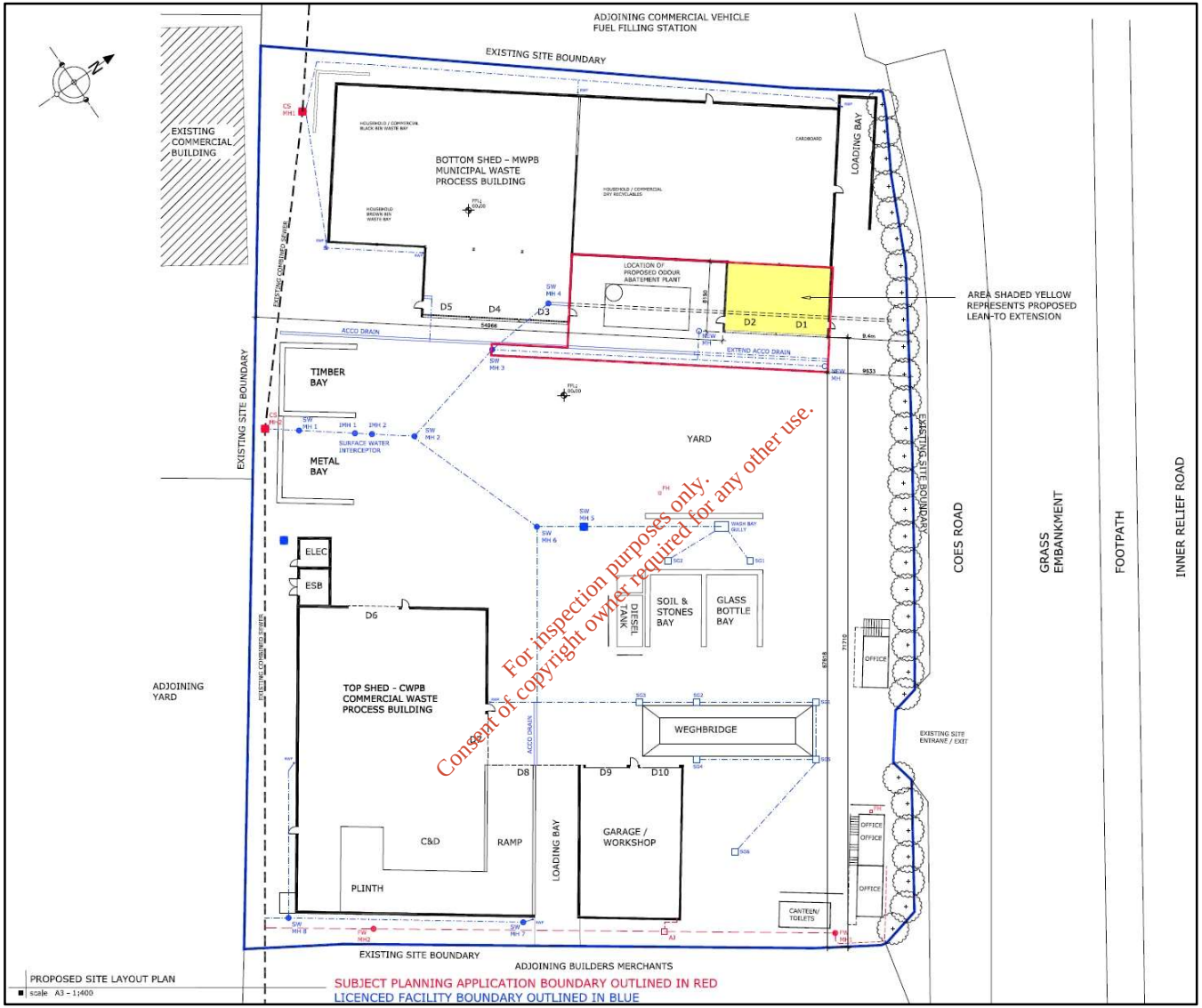

Figure 2. Site layout at Oxigen Waste Recycling Facility, Coes Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth.

4. Identification of Natura 2000 Sites

4.1. Description of Natura Sites Potentially Affected

Departmental guidance suggests an assessment of Natura 2000 sites within a zone of influence of 15 km which can be revised down depending on the proposed development and location of Natura 2000 sites. The project site is located approximately 600 m from and in the catchment of Dundalk Bay which is designated as the Dundalk Bay SAC (Site code: 000455) and Dundalk Bay SPA (Site code: 004026).

Details of the qualifying interests of the Dundalk Bay SAC are listed in Table 1 and of the Dundalk Bay SPA in Table 2 below and Site Synopses are available from the NPWS metadata website. Spatial boundary data on the Natura 2000 network was extracted from the NPWS website on 15th April 2016. The location of the development site is presented in Figure 3 in relation to the nearby Natura 2000 sites.

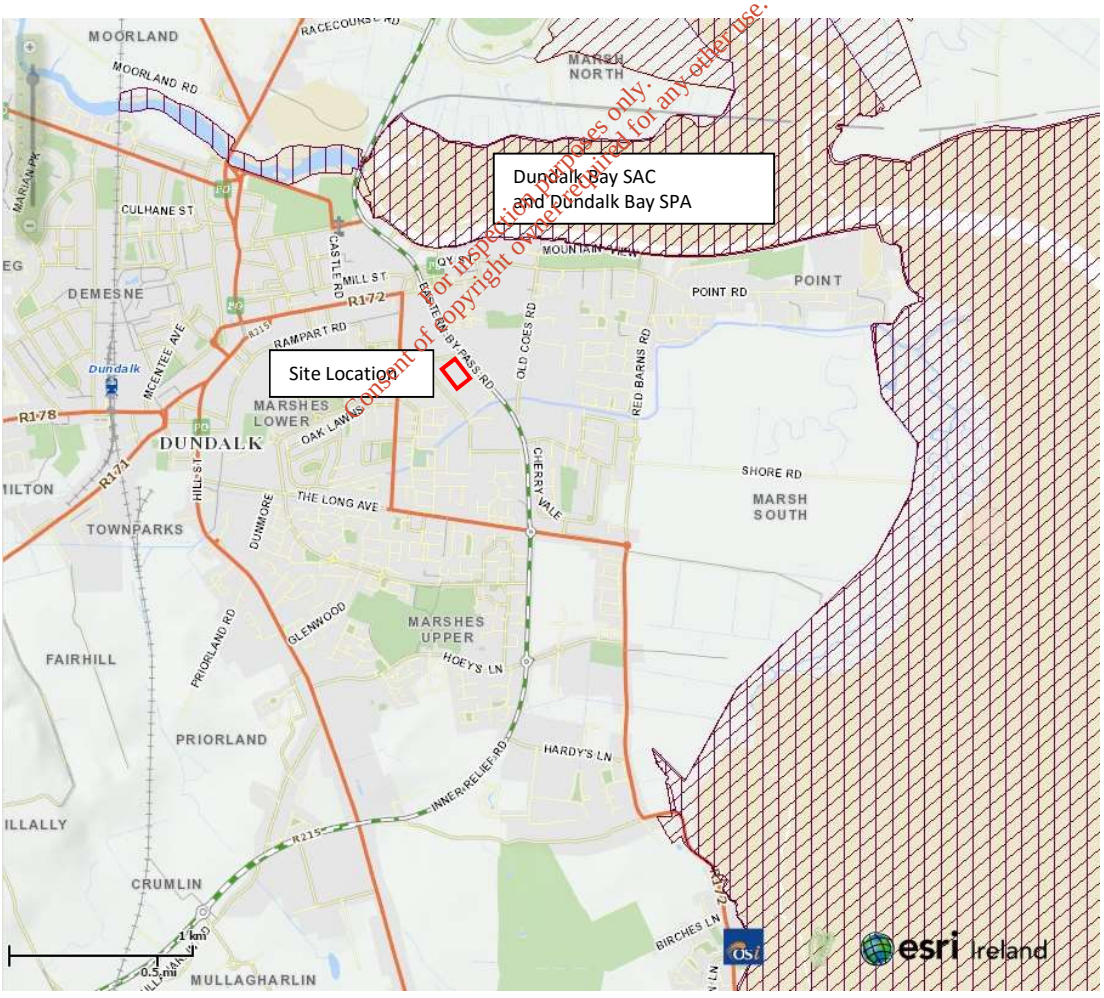

Figure 3. Site Location at Coes Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth.

Table 1. Characteristics of the SACs considered (*indicates priority habitat).

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Habitats	Qualifying Species
000455	Dundalk Bay SAC	1130 Estuaries 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide 1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks 1310 *Salicornia* and other annuals colonizing mud and sand 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*)	

Table 2. Characteristics of the SPAs considered.

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Habitats	Qualifying Species
004026	Dundalk Bay SPA	A999 Wetlands [	A005 Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* wintering A043 Greylag Goose *Anser anser* wintering A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* wintering A048 Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* wintering A052 Teal *Anas crecca* wintering A053 Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* wintering A054 Pintail *Anas acuta* wintering A065 Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra* wintering A069 Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator* wintering A130 Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* wintering A137 Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* wintering A140 Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* wintering A141 Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* wintering A142 Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* wintering A143 Knot *Calidris canutus* wintering A149 Dunlin *Calidris alpina* wintering A156 Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* wintering A157 Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* wintering A160 Curlew *Numenius arquata* wintering A162 Redshank *Tringa totanus* wintering A179 Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* wintering A182 Common Gull *Larus canus* wintering A184 Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* wintering

4.2. Conservation Objectives of the Natura 2000 Sites

The following Conservation Objectives, available from the NPWS, are set out for the European Sites. Specific attributes, measures and targets are presented in the relevant Conservation Objectives documents and will be addressed in more detail if required after potential impacts have been determined.

Dundalk Bay SAC [000455]. Version 1. 19th July 2011

1130 Estuaries

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Estuaries in Dundalk Bay SAC.

1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide at Dundalk Bay SAC.

1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Perennial vegetation of stony banks in Dundalk Bay SAC.

1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand

To restore the favourable conservation condition of Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand in Dundalk Bay SAC.

1330 Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae)

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic salt meadows in Dundalk Bay SAC.

1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi)

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Mediterranean salt meadows in Dundalk Bay SAC.

Dundalk Bay SPA [004026]. Version 1. 1st May 2013

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of **[the bird species listed]** as Special Conservation Interests for the Dundalk Bay SPA, which is defined by the following targets:

Population trend; Percentage change - Long term population trend stable or increasing.

Distribution; Range, timing and intensity of use of areas - No significant decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of areas by great northern diver, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation.

Additional specific conservation objectives are listed as follows.

A999 Wetlands & Waterbirds

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of wetland habitat in Dundalk Bay SPA as a resource for the regularly occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it. This is defined by the following attribute and target:

Habitat area; Hectares - The permanent area occupied by the wetland habitat should be stable and not significantly less than the areas of 8136, 4374 and 649 hectares respectively for subtidal, intertidal, and supratidal habitats, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation.

4.3. Assessment Criteria

4.3.1. Examples of Direct, Indirect or Secondary Impacts

In order to identify those sites that could be potentially affected, it is necessary to describe the Natura 2000 site in the context of why it has been designated i.e. in terms of its Qualifying Interests and the environmental and ecological conditions that maintain the condition of these features. The underpinning conditions that are required to maintain the 'health' of these features are listed in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Qualifying Interests and Key environmental conditions supporting site integrity.

Qualifying Interests	Key environmental conditions supporting site integrity	Current Threats to Qualifying Interests
Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)	Marine and groundwater dependent. Medium sensitivity to hydrological change. Changes in salinity and tidal regime. Overgrazing, erosion and accretion.	Overgrazing; erosion; invasive species, particularly common cordgrass (Spartina anglica); infilling and reclamation.
Estuaries	Surface and marine water dependent. Low sensitivity to hydrological changes. Aquaculture, fishing and pollution.	Aquaculture, fishing, dumping of wastes and water pollution.
Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*)	Marine and groundwater dependent. Sensitivity to hydrological change. Changes in salinity and tidal regime. Overgrazing, erosion and accretion	Overgrazing; erosion; invasive species, particularly common cordgrass (Spartina anglica); infilling and reclamation.
Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide	Surface and marine water dependent. Low sensitivity to hydrological changes. Aquaculture, fishing and pollution.	Aquaculture, fishing, dumping of wastes and water pollution.

Perennial vegetation of stony banks	Marine and groundwater dependent. Sensitivity to hydrological change. Changes in salinity and tidal regime. Overgrazing, erosion and accretion.	Overgrazing; erosion; invasive species; infilling and reclamation.
Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand	Marine and groundwater dependent. Medium sensitivity to hydrological change. Changes in salinity and tidal regime. Infilling, reclamation, invasive species.	Invasive Species; erosion and accretion.
Wetlands & Waterbirds	Highly sensitive to hydrological changes and loss of wetland habitat. Sensitive to disturbance.	A number of pressures have been identified by Crowe (2005). These pressures include: the modification of wetland sites, particularly for industry or housing and increased levels of disturbance, largely related to recreational activity. Eutrophication at a number of wetland sites as a result of nutrient inputs from a range of polluting activities were also identified as a potential pressure. However, this latter pressure is now being alleviated through stricter control of activities associated with water discharge/runoff etc. Climate change was also noted as a significant factor underlying changes in trends of wintering waterbirds in Ireland.

4.3.2. Ecological Network Supporting Natura 2000 Sites

An analysis of the proposed Natural Heritage Areas and designated Natural Heritage Areas in terms of their role in supporting the species using Natura 2000 sites was undertaken. It was assumed that these supporting roles mainly related to mobile fauna such as mammals and birds which may use pNHAs and NHAs as “stepping stones” between Natura 2000 sites.

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive and the Habitats Regulations 2011 place a high degree of importance on such non-Natura 2000 areas as features that connect the Natura 2000 network. Features such as ponds, woodlands and important hedgerows were taken into account during the rest of the AA process.

The Dundalk Bay SAC is also a proposed Natural Heritage Areas and as such is addressed under the higher conservation status.

5. Identification of Potential Impacts & Assessment of Significance

The project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the sites considered in the assessment and therefore potential impacts must be identified and considered.

5.1. Potential Impacts

This section uses the information collected on the sensitivity of the Natura 2000 sites considered and describes any likely significant effects of implementation of the Project. This assumes the absence of any controls, conditions or assumption mitigation measures.

The likely significant effects of the Project are presented in Table 4 below, both in isolation and potentially in combination with other plans and projects.

There would be no direct impacts and no habitat fragmentation in the Natura 2000 sites considered in this assessment. Having considered direct impacts and ruling them out, indirect impacts are then considered.

A worst case scenario would occur whereby the project would result in a significant detrimental change in water quality in Dundalk Bay either alone or in combination with other projects or plans as a result of indirect pollution of surface or groundwater leading to Dundalk Bay and thus on the habitats and food sources of the species for which the Dundalk Bay sites have been selected. The effect would have to be considered in terms of changes in water quality which would affect the habitats or food sources for which the SAC and SPA species are designated.

The proposed project construction or operation phases will not have an impact on water quality, therefore significant impacts on the Dundalk Bay European sites can be ruled out.

5.2. Assessment of Potential Cumulative Effects

Cumulative impacts or effects are changes in the environment that result from numerous human-induced, small-scale alterations. Cumulative impacts can be thought of as occurring through two main pathways: first, through persistent additions or losses of the same materials or resource, and second, through the compounding effects as a result of the coming together of two or more effects.

As part of the Screening for an Appropriate Assessment, in addition to the proposed works, other relevant projects and plans in the area must also be considered at this stage. This step aims to identify at this early stage any possible significant in-combination or cumulative effects / impacts of the proposed development with other such plans and projects on the Natura 2000 sites.

A search of the Louth County Council Planning webpage revealed that there have been 18 other planning applications in the past three years for the entry 'Coes Road'. Given the type of development proposed and the determination of no impacts, there would be no in-combination effects with other projects in the area.

The Louth County Development Plan in complying with the requirements of the Habitats Directive requires that all Projects and Plans that could affect the Natura 2000 sites in the same zone of influence of the project site would be initially screened for Appropriate Assessment and if requiring Stage 2 AA, that appropriate employable mitigation measures would be put in place to avoid, reduce or ameliorate negative impacts. In this way any in-combination impacts with Plans or Projects for the area of Coes Road in which the development site is located, would be avoided.

Any new applications for the project area will be assessed on a case by case basis by Louth County Council which will determine the requirement for AA Screening as per the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

Table 4. Outlining the predicted impacts of the Project.

Site	Distance from Project	Potential Direct Impacts e.g. Habitat Loss	Potential Indirect Impacts e.g. alteration to hydrological regime	Surface or Groundwater Contamination	Disturbance to Protected Species (Habitats Directive Annex II & IV)	Stage 2 AA Required
000455 Dundalk Bay SAC	1 km	None	None.	None.	No	No
004026 Dundalk Bay SPA	1 km	None	None.	None.	No	No

6. Screening Statement

It has been objectively concluded by Moore Group Environmental Services that:

1. The project is not directly connected with, or necessary to the conservation management of the Dundalk Bay SAC and Dundalk Bay SPA or any other Natura 2000 sites.
2. The current status of the project has not and is not having a significant direct impact on the Dundalk Bay SAC and Dundalk Bay SPA.
3. The proposed development is unlikely to indirectly, significantly affect the Qualifying interests or Conservation Objectives of the Dundalk Bay SAC and Dundalk Bay SPA.
4. The project, alone or in combination with other projects, is not likely to have significant effects on the Dundalk Bay SAC and Dundalk Bay SPA or any other Natura 2000 sites in view of their conservation objectives.
5. It has been determined by Moore Group Environmental Services that it is possible to rule out likely significant impacts on any Natura 2000 sites considered in the assessment.
6. It is possible to conclude that there would be no adverse effects on site integrity resulting from the project and that there would be no significant effects, no potentially significant effects and no uncertain effects if the project were to proceed.

It is the view of Moore Group Environmental Services that it is not necessary to undertake any further stage of the Appropriate Assessment process.

A finding of no significant effects report is presented in Appendix A in accordance with the EU Commission's methodological guidance (European Commission, 2001).

7. References

Crowe, O. (2005) Ireland's Wetlands and their Waterbirds; Status and Distribution. BirdWatch Ireland.

Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2010) Guidance on Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland (as amended February 2010).

European Commission (2000) Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.

European Commission Environment DG (2001) Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43EEC. European Commission, Brussels.

European Commission (2007) Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive '92/43/EEC: Clarification of the concepts of: alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interests, compensatory measures, overall coherence and opinion of the Commission. European Commission, Brussels.

NPWS (2002) Dundalk Bay SPA [004026] Site Synopsis. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.

NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: Dundalk Bay SAC 000455 and Dundalk Bay SPA 004026. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2013) The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.

NPWS (2014) Site synopsis of the Dundalk Bay SAC 000455. Version date: 31.01.2014 000455_Rev13.Doc. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.

Appendix A

FINDING **O**F **N**O **S**IGNIFICANT **E**FFECTS REPORT

Finding no significant effects report matrix

Name of project or plan

Development at the Existing Oxigen Waste Recycling Facility, Coes Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth.

Name and location of the Natura 2000 site(s)

The project site is located approximately 600 m from and in the catchment of Dundalk Bay which is designated as the Dundalk Bay SAC (Site code: 000455) and Dundalk Bay SPA (Site code: 004026).

Description of the project or plan

This report contains information required for the competent authority, in this case Louth County Council, to undertake an Appropriate Assessment (AA) process on the proposed development of (a) a lean-to extension of 95 m² to the front of the existing Waste Recycling Building, (b) installation of Odour Abatement Plant to the existing Waste Recycling Building to include a 20m high Stack, (c) associated site services at the existing Oxigen Waste Recycling Facility, Coes Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth.

Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site(s)

No

Are there other projects or plans that together with the projects or plan being assessed could affect the site

A search of the Louth County Council Planning webpage revealed that there have been 18 other planning applications in the past three years for the entry 'Coes Road'. Given the type of development proposed and the determination of no impacts, there would be no in-combination effects with other projects in the area.

The Louth County Development Plan in complying with the requirements of the Habitats Directive requires that all Projects and Plans that could affect the Natura 2000 sites in the same zone of influence of the project site would be initially screened for Appropriate Assessment and if requiring Stage 2 AA, that appropriate employable mitigation measures would be put in place to avoid, reduce or ameliorate negative impacts. In this way any in-combination impacts with Plans or Projects for the area of Coes Road in which the development site is located, would be avoided.

Any new applications for the project area will be assessed on a case by case basis by Louth County Council which will determine the requirement for AA Screening as per the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

The assessment of significance of effects

Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site.

There would be no direct impacts on the Natura 2000 sites considered in this assessment. Having considered direct impacts and ruling them out, indirect impacts are then considered.

A worst case scenario would occur whereby the project would result in a significant detrimental change in water quality in Dundalk Bay either alone or in combination with other projects or plans as a result of indirect pollution of surface or groundwater leading to Dundalk Bay and thus on the habitats and food sources of the species for which the Dundalk Bay sites have been selected. The effect would have to be considered in terms of changes in water quality which would affect the habitats or food sources for which the SAC and SPA species are designated.

Explain why these effects are not considered significant.
The proposed project construction or operation phases will not have an impact on water quality, therefore significant impacts on the Dundalk Bay European sites can be ruled out.

List of agencies consulted: provide contact name and telephone or e-mail address
The requirement for AA Screening was determined through pre-planning scoping with Louth County Council.

Response to consultation
N/A

Data collected to carry out the assessment

Who carried out the assessment

Moore Group Environmental Services.

Sources of data
NPWS database of designated sites at www.npws.ie
National Biodiversity Data Centre database http://maps.biodiversityireland.ie

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Level of assessment completed
Desktop Assessment.

Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed
Louth County Council Planning Section.

Overall Conclusions

It has been objectively concluded by Moore Group Environmental Services that:

1. The project is not directly connected with, or necessary to the conservation management of the Dundalk Bay SAC and Dundalk Bay SPA or any other Natura 2000 sites.
2. The current status of the project has not and is not having a significant direct impact on the Dundalk Bay SAC and Dundalk Bay SPA.
3. The proposed development is unlikely to indirectly, significantly affect the Qualifying interests or Conservation Objectives of the Dundalk Bay SAC and Dundalk Bay SPA.

4. The project, alone or in combination with other projects, is not likely to have significant effects on the Dundalk Bay SAC and Dundalk Bay SPA or any other Natura 2000 sites in view of their conservation objectives.
5. It has been determined by Moore Group Environmental Services that it is possible to rule out likely significant impacts on any Natura 2000 sites considered in the assessment.
6. It is possible to conclude that there would be no adverse effects on site integrity resulting from the project and that there would be no significant effects, no potentially significant effects and no uncertain effects if the project were to proceed.

It is the view of Moore Group Environmental Services that it is not necessary to undertake any further stage of the Appropriate Assessment process.